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TIMES EDITORIALS

John McCone, Public Servant

A frequent complaint heard around this republic is that able men are reluctant to serve the government, particularly if they had applied their ability at any time in their lives to making money.

John A. McCone's is a case in point, and the case history serves as a general answer to the complaint.

McCone made his own way up the ladder to president of a shipbuilding corporation for which he set production goals nobody believed could be achieved. The result was 467 wartime ships worth a billion dollars. In his pursuit of private fortune McCone found time for public service as a director of Stanford Research Institute, a trustee of Caltech, a regent of Loyola University, an organizer of the Los Angeles World Affairs Council.

President Truman drew him into national affairs, although he is a Republican, by appointing him to the Air Policy Commission where he helped Thomas K. Finletter write the famous report "Survival in the Air Age." He became Air Force undersecretary under Finletter in 1950, and in that year, significantly, he recommended to President Truman that the embryo guided missile program be conducted by a man with full authority and control of funds to exercise "absolute power over the entire effort." He gave President Eisenhower the same advice after the first Sputnik was orbited.

Although he resigned as Air Force undersecretary in 1951, he was re-

public servants. The job sought the man: McCone consented last fall to become chief of the Central Intelligence Agency, one of the most difficult places in the government.

One of his rewards for accepting this onerous post is a current series of attacks on his integrity as a public servant by the widely published columnist Drew Pearson. The articles have been published on Page 6 of this section of The Times. The motive of the Pearson "crusade" is obscure, but the treatment of McCone is sheerly vindictive. The technique is the smear: the charges are made but the answers are suppressed unless they serve the accuser's purpose.

Pearson based his columns on three congressional hearings, with quotations torn out of the context of several hundred pages of record. The first, in 1946, was an inquiry into shipbuilding profits while McCone was still president of the California Shipbuilding Corp. This was followed shortly by his summons to national service under President Truman. The second, about plane contracts, was held in 1953 while McCone was between public jobs, but he was recalled to service in 1954. The third, held in 1958, rehashed older charges, and it was followed by McCone's unanimous confirmation by the Senate as a member of the AEC.

Three Presidents and the U.S. Senate could find no conflict between McCone's public service and the service he gave his private interests.

The Pearson charges will not have any effect on Senate